

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 IO-13 H-01
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
USNMR SHAPE IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 15973

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, CG, FR, BE
SUBJ: FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER ON SHABA OPERATION

REF: BRUSSELS 9649 (NOTAL)

1. IN A PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED TV APPEARANCE AT 1330
LOCAL MAY 19, FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD COMMENTED
ON THE SHABA OPERATION AS FOLLOWS: A MILITARY OPERA-
TION INVOLVING FRENCH AND BELGIAN TROOPS IS IN PROCESS
IN THE SOUTH OF ZAIRE TO ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE FOREIGN
CITIZENS IN DANGER AT KOLWEZI...FOR THE MOMENT NO
FRENCH PARACHUTISTS HAVE JUMPED INTO KOLWEZI...WE HAVE
TAKEN THE DECISION TO INTERVENE AS THE FIRST ECHELON
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OF A DISPOSITION TO BE COMPLETED BY A LATER BELGIAN
INTERVENTION DESIGNED TO EVACUATE THOSE WHO WISH IT...
THIS OPERATION HAS BEEN MADE AT THE REQUEST OF THE
ZAIRE GOVERNMENT, IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH THE BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT, IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
WHICH HAS FURNISHED TRANSPORT MEANS, AND IN CONCERTA-
TION WITH OTHER EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, MOST NOTABLY

THE BRITISH.

2. GUIRINGAUD ADDED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS FRIDAY MORNING WITH THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WHO, ON EACH OCCASION, EXPRESSED HIMSELF IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH WHAT FRANCE WAS PREPARING. ADDITIONALLY, HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD HAD SPOKEN FOR TEN MINUTES DURING THE MORNING WITH BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS WHO HAD EXPRESSED HIS FULL AGREEMENT WITH THE ACTION UNDERTAKEN BY FRANCE.

3. A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CABINET TELLS US THAT THE STATEMENT WAS DESIGNED TO PUT TO REST PRESS REPORTS OF A RIFT BETWEEN FRANCE AND BELGIUM OVER THE OPERATION. IN TALKING WITH US HE ATTEMPTED TO PLAY DOWN THE EXTENT OF THE DISAGREEMENT SAYING THAT SINCE THE FRENCH WERE THERE AND READY TO GO IN AND THE BELGIANS WERE NOT, THE FRENCH HAD DECIDED TO GO AHEAD. SUBSEQUENT WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF COMMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE "CHARACTER OF THE FRENCH OPERATION IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF THE BELGIAN OPERATION" WILL CLEARLY KEEP PUBLIC TALK OF A RIFT ALIVE DESPITE HIS REPORTED DENIAL OF ANY DIPLOMATIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

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4. PRESIDENT GISCARD IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A TELEVISED ADDRESS TONIGHT AT 2000 LOCAL ON THE FRENCH OPERATION IN SHABA. WE WILL BE REPORTING AND COMMENTING ON HIS REMARKS IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARD.
HARTMAN

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